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# REPORT TO HUMANITARIANS

Number 44 — June, 1978

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A NON-PROFIT NATIONAL HUMANE SOCIETY  
FOR THE PREVENTION OF ANIMAL SUFFERING

4495 Ninth Avenue North  
St. Petersburg, Florida 33713

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## HUMANE INFORMATION SERVICES MOURNS DEATH OF PRESIDENT THOMSEN

Dr. Frederick L. Thomsen, Ph.D., president of Humane Information Services, Inc., and its sister society, the National Association for Humane Legislation, Inc., both headquartered in St. Petersburg, Florida, died on April 3 at the age of 79.

"Doc," as he was affectionately known, had been in failing health for some months but had put off a medical checkup because "we have too much work to do." Around the beginning of the year his health worsened. On February 27 he entered the hospital in agony. Tests revealed a malignant tumor of the colon. Three major surgical procedures during March failed to save his life, and death came following much suffering and several days in a comatose state. His body was cremated, in accordance with his wishes.

Doc was born in Newport News, Virginia. He was a veteran of World War I. He received his doctorate at the University of Wisconsin in 1925, at the early age of 27. His distinguished career included positions as professor of agricultural marketing at the University of Missouri and head

of several divisions in the United States Department of Agriculture.

He was the author of numerous research publications, journal articles and analyses. He wrote several textbooks published by McGraw-Hill Book Company, including *Agricultural Prices* (First Edition) and *Agricultural Marketing*.

For many years Doc was active in animal welfare work and served as a director and officer of local, state and national humane societies, including the Humane Society of the United States. In 1965 he founded Humane Information Services, now recognized as one of the largest national humane societies in this country. In 1970 he incorporated a second organization, for legislative purposes, and served both societies without remuneration.

Those who knew him personally and worked with him have indeed been privileged. His sincerity and dedication, his intelligence and ingenuity, and his patience and indefatigability were a source of wonder and inspiration to all.

Doc was a giant among humanitarians, a



Frederick L. Thomsen  
1898-1978

very special person. He is sorely missed, but his influence on the humane movement will continue.

Appearing in this issue are just a few of many tributes to Doc for his countless contributions to the relief of animal suffering. It is for these contributions that he would want to be most remembered.

## Doc Thomsen leaves a legacy of kindness

By LOIS STEVENSON

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — Doc Thomsen is gone. He will be greatly missed by many thousands of humanitarians.

It was an indication of the fond regard in which he was held that everyone was privileged to call him Doc, for Frederick L. Thomsen, Ph.D., had a distinguished career.

His doctorate in economics led him to a full professorship at the University of Missouri, then to director of marketing research for the U.S. Department of Agriculture in Washington. Later, he was executive vice president and research director for Commodity Marketing Corp. in New York City, moving to St. Petersburg, Fla. in 1950, where he served as private consultant to banks and business firms.

Doc was the author of numerous research publications and several textbooks on prices and marketing. It was this talent for research he brought to the humane movement when he retired in 1965 and founded Humane Information

Services.

In his quarterly "Report to Humanitarians" Doc analyzed in detail the myriad facets of cruelty. His logical and knowledgeable intellect always stayed within the bounds of good sense and practicality. But he never hesitated to tell the truth as he saw it, no matter how many might disagree with him.

### Animals and People

He wrote about rodeo, bow and arrow hunting, puppy mills, trapping, the surplus animal population, euthanasia, dogfighting, greyhound racing, food animals, laboratory animals and numerous other concerns. His reports furnished much valuable information to humanitarian leaders.

Doc's research always was meticulous. He went directly to the sources, never depending on hearsay. For exam-

ple, he visited dozens of slaughterhouses throughout the country before he wrote: "By far the greatest cruelty inflicted upon animals is found in the production, transportation and slaughter of meat animals. . . . The things that are done to them when they are killed vie with the worst tortures of the Inquisition. Does that sound to you as an exaggeration, offered for dramatic effect? We assure you that it is not. It is the literal truth."

His descriptions of the brutal procedures he observed in slaughter plants were graphic, but he felt humanitarians should be highly motivated to work for change. "No humane problem is more important," he wrote in 1974. Since then, officials from several national animal welfare organizations have formed The Council for Livestock Protection to work toward humane slaughter methods.

\* \* \*

Despite his deep emotional commitment to the cause of animal welfare, Doc kept his protests cool and well-reasoned. Problems presented in his publications were followed by carefully

thought out sensible remedies. He spoke articulately and rationally at conferences and meetings.

Doc took no remuneration from his organization, and was frugal with every penny donated. He answered each of the many thousands of inquiries and requests for help that came to him, and never took credit for the many accomplishments that resulted. He believed that anything done for the good of animals was reason enough in itself.

The usually busy office here in St. Petersburg is silent today, as the people who have worked so closely with Doc absorb their loss and pause for a while before resuming the task they will carry on for him.

The new person who will take over the work Doc has done so magnificently for the past 12 years will have a sturdy base on which to build. The organization plans to implement many of the actions Doc advocated, and to fulfill his dream, "the mobilization of humane resources into programs dealing directly with the most pressing humane problems."

*The article immediately above was written by the very dedicated and well-known humanitarian and columnist Lois (Mrs. Fred L.) Stevenson, of Green Brook, New Jersey. It was taken from the April 30, 1978, issue of The Sunday Star-Ledger, Newark, New Jersey. We are very much indebted to Mrs. Stevenson for this beautiful tribute to Doc, who would have appreciated it.*

## OUR PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

Many communications we are receiving indicate concern about plans for the future of Humane Information Services or whether, indeed, it will continue at all! They ask, Will *Report to Humanitarians* be published as usual?

We assure you, most emphatically, that Humane Information Services is continuing in operation and will continue to operate as heretofore. Its headquarters will remain in St. Petersburg, Florida; at least there are no present plans to move elsewhere. And it will strive to maintain the high standards which have earned us our present enviable reputation in the humane movement and among other groups.

Until such time as our board of directors, which is made up of very dedicated, sincere humanitarians, elects a new president, our acting president is John D. Fite, of Clearwater, Florida, a very prominent attorney. Letters to him should be addressed to our headquarters office, 4495 Ninth Avenue North, St. Petersburg, Florida 33713.

Except for several small bequests to friends of long standing, Dr. Thomsen bequeathed his entire estate to Humane Information Services. This will now permit the society to add to its small staff much-needed field representatives and office personnel and to employ an executive director from among those persons Doc considered most qualified for this very important position. It is expected that announcement of these appointments can be made in the next issue of *Report to Humanitarians*.

It seems appropriate at this time to reiterate the purposes and objectives of Humane Information Services. We have long realized that our name has been somewhat of a disadvantage. It indicates that we are only a service for the supplying of information, when in reality we are a full-fledged humane society with ongoing programs for the prevention of cruelty to animals and the relief of suffering among animals. What makes us different from

June, 1978

REPORT TO HUMANITARIANS No. 44

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## PLANS — FROM PAGE 1

in an issue of *Report to Humanitarians*:

"In 1965, when we incorporated, there were numerous other national humane societies of one kind or another. Why did we think another one was needed?

"Very simply, we believed that the other societies were not doing, and gave no promise of doing, the kind of a job that needed to be done. A great void existed, which we hoped to fill for the benefit of the animals.

"The energies of the national societies have been directed at correcting the relatively unimportant, inconsequential cases of animal suffering, while the big, important humane problems were almost totally neglected. This very marked tendency, which still prevails, arises from a number of factors. The little problems present comparatively little difficulty, whereas the big problems, involving millions of animals and untold suffering, require broader thinking, larger plans and more capable action. The little problems frequently have a greater appeal to animal lovers, many of whom are more impressed with help for individual animals than for large categories of animals. Because of these conditions, the societies have not recognized the importance of setting up priorities for the purpose of redirecting their efforts into more productive channels.

"In trying to redirect the attention of humane organizations and humane leaders from the many minor, inconsequential episodes of cruelty to animals, toward the big, important humane problems, we have reiterated and will continue to reiterate the basic principle which should establish priorities for the use of our humane resources.

"Each source of animal suffering may be ranked according to its importance, based upon three facts: the total number of animals involved, the average amount of suffering per animal, and how much of the total suffering involved might be eliminated over a period of the foreseeable future by the kind of programs the humane movement is capable of conducting. These conditions determine the total amount of animal suffering which it is possible to eliminate if appropriate programs are adopted and vigorously pursued. They guide us constantly in all of our work."

We sincerely hope our many members and friends will continue to support our work during this transition period. Your patience and understanding are very much appreciated. Let us hear from you.

Humane Information Services will send a receipt for dues or a contribution in the amount of \$5.00 or more, or in a lesser amount if the sender so requests, or if same is received in cash, by money order or from a foreign country. Otherwise your cancelled check will serve as a receipt. All dues and contributions are tax deductible.

To: Humane Information Services, Inc.  
4495 Ninth Avenue North  
St. Petersburg, Florida 33713

RETURN COUPON

☐ I wish to receive future issues of *Report to Humanitarians*.

☐ I do not wish to be kept on your mailing list.

☐ My name and address on the reverse side are correct and should read as follows:

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☐ I wish to become an Associate Member and enclose annual dues of \$\_\_\_\_ (\$1.00 to \$4.99).

☐ I wish to continue my membership and enclose \$\_\_\_\_\_

☐ I wish to make a contribution and enclose \$\_\_\_\_\_

## In Memoriam

The directors, officers and staff of Humane Information Services are deeply grateful for the many cards and letters of condolence, also assurances of continued support for the organization, received from members and others since the death of Dr. Thomsen. We will want to read a few excerpts from these messages:

"It is with great regret that I learned of the death of Dr. Thomsen, one of the foremost workers for animal welfare in this country. I hope the important humane problems which you and he carried on over many years will continue. You may be sure of continued membership. With best wishes."--Dr. William A. Ritchie, Delmar, New York

"I am at a loss for words to express my grief. Doc meant so much to so many, and his loss will be felt by all of us for many years to come."--David S. Claflin, President, Massachusetts SPCA, Boston, Massachusetts, and International Society for the Protection of Animals, London, England.

"Dr. Thomsen was a wonderful man--sincere, dedicated and tireless as a worker to relieve the suffering of animals. His was almost a one-man crusade. Truly of Dr. Thomsen it can be said that he died with his boots on. Even though I did not know him personally, I always had a high regard for him. His loss is deeply felt."--Louis Warter, Bronx, New York.

"Doc was a great man. It can surely be said that he had few if any peers in the dedication, thoughtfulness, and intelligence he brought to the humane movement. He was a dear friend and a great inspiration to me. Though we did not always agree, on the major concerns we were surely united. He taught me much, and I am privileged to have known him so well.

"The HSUS and the entire humane movement has lost a great friend and counselor. His wisdom, insight, and persistent prodding shall be missed."--John A. Hoyt, President, The Humane Society of the United States, Washington, D. C.

"It is ironic that one who was so dedicated to end or at least lessen pain and suffering should himself suffer so much. I am truly sorry. You who worked so closely with him and all who had the benefit of his brilliant mind will always be the richer because of his ability to guide us in our thinking toward the animals."--Mrs. W. H. Eichelberger, Lake Park, Florida.

"We were shocked and saddened to learn of the death of Dr. Thomsen. He was a dedicated animal missionary, and his passing is a great loss to us all."--Mrs. James K. President, Defenders of Animal Rights, Baltimore, Maryland.

"Doc will be especially missed by those like me who treasured his unusual insight, his honesty and courage, and his very thorough coverage of whatever aspect of humane work he entered into. I am sure that the board of directors of both organizations which he was president will not find as capable a person to take his place.

"We must go on, however. And we must be strong, especially you. I know well how you must feel. I feel the same way about my late wife, Nellie, who was the spearhead of practically all the good work we have accomplished in this area for animal welfare. In a field where near charlatanism rules, the loss of such persons as Doc and Nellie is almost devastating. But we can continue in the paths Doc laid out for us and we will."--Edward Newman, Woodland Hills, California.

"How thankful we all are to have had Doc for so long, and how much suffering he prevented in his lifetime! One of the truly great men of all the ages."--Mrs. Frances Holway, Rye, New Hampshire.

"I am shocked and much saddened, for Doc has been a good friend for over 15 years. We will all miss him very much because he had the rare gift of seeing things objectively and of being able to write about them clearly and explicitly. I liked Doc because it was possible to disagree with him, to argue with him intelligently and to arrive at a solution that we could both endorse.

"I don't have to tell you, I guess--I thought Doc was quite a guy and I will really miss him."--Jacques V. Sichel, Union, New Jersey.

"'Doc' Thomsen was truly a completely unselfish, sincere and dedicated humanitarian. ...Richland SPCA members will recall that 80-year-old Doc made a trip to Columbia, South Carolina in December to testify in our behalf at the public hearing on the decompression chamber. He had to come on the bus because he had an inner ear problem and could not fly. It was a grueling trip for Doc, and, as fate would have it, it was his last trip because he fell ill shortly after returning to St. Petersburg.

"Doc's shoes can never be filled, but the passage of our proposed euthanasia legislation, H-3235, adapted from material initially authored by Doc, would be a fitting tribute to a fine human being who wholly dedicated the twilight years of his life to the assuagement of the suffering of animals."--Mrs. Fred B. Johnston, II, Columbia, South Carolina (excerpts taken from article in *Animal Crackers*, publication of The Richland SPCA, Columbia, South Carolina).

"I was very saddened to learn of Doc's death. What a tremendous sorrow for you and what a great loss to the whole humane movement that never can be filled!"--Burton M. Parks, Pinehurst, North Carolina.

"Doc will be sadly missed, but his work will be carried on in remembrance of his concern and effort for animal welfare. He handed us a torch, and we shall 'carry it.'"--Mrs. Thelma C. Dangers, Clio, Michigan.

MEMORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS  
have been received from ...

Ms. Judith A. Adams, Brooksville, Florida, "in memory of Doc and of my beloved Buzzy, who died of leukemia."

Mrs. Reidun Atkinson, Sarasota, Florida, "as a tribute to Dr. Thomsen. His dedication will be with us forever."

Mrs. Beulah B. Billings, Drain, Oregon, "in memory of a wonderful eleven-plus-year relationship with my beloved black cat Clyde, who crossed the road in front of a speeding car."

Burton M. Parks, Pinehurst, North Carolina, "in Doc's memory. How I wish it could be many times larger."

Ms. Nancie L. Sailor, Mountain View, California, and LaVerne and Glenn Ellis, Eureka, Illinois, "in memory of Artis Sailor, who passed away April 12, 1978. She loved animals very much."

Miss Virginia D. Shefchick, Menlo Park, California, "in memory of Dr. Thomsen."

Miss Ruby D. Smith, Sarasota, Florida, "in memory of Dr. Thomsen."

Mrs. Dorit Tabackman, Paris, France, "in memory of Renate Tardosky, who helped me with my first book, 'The Life of a Cat'."



The following article was written by Dr. Thomsen about a year ago but had not been published. It seems to us appropriate to include it in this issue, not only because it provides excellent food for thought but because it speaks so beautifully of another great humanitarian, Fred Myers, who passed away in 1963 and, like Dr. Thomsen, was a loss to the humane movement beyond measure.

## SOME PERSONAL REFLECTIONS ABOUT FRED MYERS, THE "MIRACLE OF BIRTH" AND PET POPULATION CONTROL

By  
Frederick L. Thomsen

### WHAT MAKES A HUMANITARIAN?

One thing on which Fred and I had great difficulty seeing eye to eye was the general subject of what makes a humanitarian a humanitarian. I had thought, and still do, that intimate experience with animals was a necessary part of the life experience that molds a humanitarian. One rarely if ever becomes a humanitarian as a result of abstract reasoning, or taking a job with a humane society. It is the emotional experiences connected with constant association with individual animals that are loved and which return that love, which make a humanitarian. Just being around animals, as is a zoo keeper, a cowboy, a laboratory animal technician, a shelter attendant, a veterinarian or a packinghouse worker will not create a humanitarian. On the contrary, such constant contact with the seamy side of animal existence may lead to callousness and hardening of the arteries of the heart.

And what personal experience with animals is most calculated to implant in a person that love and respect for them which turns an ordinary animal lover into a humanitarian? I argued with Fred that it was the experience of having a loved female cat or dog bear a litter of kittens or puppies, and bring them up as a part of the household. Particularly with cats is this process endearing. The devotion of the mother cat, the purring and licking and breast-feeding, the later boxing of the young one's ears to bring conformance with cat rules of child behavior, the fierce defense of the young by a mother cat one-fifth the weight of a passing dog, all are calculated to make a forever-after devoted animal lover. If children do not get this sort of experience during their formative years, I argued, what will they learn in books or from pictures which will make adult humanitarians of them?

So, I argued with Fred, the human mothers who insist that their children should experience vicariously "the miracle of birth" have a point, although what they have in mind is not making humanitarians out of the kids. And we are evading the real question when we pertly retort: "But they should also see the miracle of death in the execution chambers."

The kittens and puppies at least live a happy life for weeks or months, and perhaps a few years if the family is able to find some new homes for a few of them. That is true whether or not the new homes are permanent, or good or bad, or if this effort to persuade neighborhood people to adopt the progeny of the "miracle of birth" is really just a "game of musical chairs."

Meanwhile, I argued, the miracle of birth and its aftermath has served to instill in many of the children a love for animals which no other kind of contact could produce. Future humanitarians are made. And the kids derive other emotional values which should tend to make them better wives, husbands and citizens in the future. In the long run, is the cause of animal welfare served by depriving children of these experiences, even at the gain of preventing the birth of many ultimately unwanted pet animals?

Assuming that the net number of unwanted animals resulting from this process, after deducting needed replacements for pets dying of old age, disease or accident, and pets placed in new homes resulting from human population growth, are given a really humane death, what is wrong with providing future humanitarians and better citizens plus a happy although a

Myers in one of our arguments. Everything has a price, I argued, and the price of humane education must be compared with its benefits.

Fred was familiar with all of the conventional platitudes of the humane movement about such matters. But he was also a realist, and willing to look hard facts in the face.

His best argument against my position was that even the "miracle of birth" did not work except for a small percentage of those who observed it. It is the continuing process of having the right kind of contact with animals, over a long period, that really makes a humanitarian. One can get at least almost equivalent emotional contact with animals by having a spayed or neutered pet, observing its personality traits, and especially from having a very close personal relationship with the animal, such as having it sleep in or on one's bed.

The "pet" owner who prides himself or herself on having a "well-trained" pet which always goes to its own basket, box or chair to sleep, which is trained to "heel" and observe all of the good-conduct rules prized by the animal trainer, never benefits fully from such a relationship. The exuberance of a bouncing kitten or a happy, "disobedient" dog out for a walk escapes them. They are the orderly, coldly logical types to whom an animal is an ornament, a protector or just another toy for the kids, rather than an integral part of themselves. Mother cats, birth, baby kittens and puppies, cute as they are, also can be only those things. They cannot be considered necessary to provide the animal-loving syndrome which makes children into future humanitarians, and adults into real "animal people."

Over the years since then, I have come around to this view entirely, although still retaining regrets that the litter of kittens or puppies cannot be a part of the life experience of most children.

### THE "SAVE-A-LIFERS"

Another of Fred's positions which at first I found difficult to accept was one that still is of critical importance in the humane movement.

Fred thought that the greatest single obstacle to solution of the pet animal surplus problem was the "save-a-lifers," whose primary goal is to prevent the death of an animal, as opposed to preventing the suffering and deaths of far greater numbers in the future.

At the time of our discussions, the principal manifestation of the "save-a-life" syndrome was the antipathy to euthanasia. Although many people still object to this aspect of humane work, and will drop a bag full of kittens or puppies by the roadside rather than take them to the shelter for euthanasia, hoping that at least some of the animals may find "good homes," the acceptance of euthanasia in those days was much less common. I well remember taking the elevator to the hotel floor where a humane convention was being held, wearing my badge. The young woman elevator operator looked at it with no effort to hide her distaste. "So you are one of those sadists who kill thousands of poor, helpless dogs and cats," she said.

Many members of humane societies felt the same way about it. Around the country there came into existence a number of local animal shelters which took in unwanted pet animals, assuring their patrons that none except the diseased and badly injured would be "put to sleep." Their goal was to find "good homes" for all of these

veterinary services for the sick and injured animals so they could be rehabilitated for adoption, despite the fact that perfectly healthy animals were being turned away at the door, and were being slaughtered in the community's other shelters and pounds and on the highways.

Under this policy, the "save-a-life" shelters soon became full to capacity, and additional animals could be accepted only as those on hand were "adopted out." Some of the animals of an age, appearance or condition making them unattractive to potential adopters were kept on hand for weeks, months and even years. Since the number of adopters was much smaller than the number of people offering their unwanted pets to these shelters, they were caring for a pitifully minute portion of the total surplus production of dogs and cats. Yet their founders, directors and financial supporters blissfully ignored the millions of other dogs and cats they could not care for. Some of the famous personalities who started these "save-a-life" shelters received glowing write-ups in the media, and were popular speakers at humane society and other conventions, where "save-a-lifers" always abound. And they were overwhelmed by the financial largess of their admirers, the while other hardworking but practical shelters and humane societies were struggling to make ends meet.

### PREVENTION THE BEST CURE

In the intervening years more and more people have gradually come to realize that these "save-a-lifers" do not have the answer to the pet over-population problem, that euthanasia is necessary, and that we should be devoting our efforts to making it what the name implies, rather than acting as if it were not an essential part of the pet animal welfare scene.

But, most important of all, most people, not alone those in the humane movement, have come to realize that the real solution of the problem is to prevent the birth of more dogs and cats than can be absorbed by the potential good homes available. This is now the battle cry of nearly all humanitarians and humane societies. Prevention, it is recognized, is the best cure.

### SAVE-A-LIFERS' INFLUENCE STILL DOMINATES POLICIES

At least, humanitarians believe they are for prevention rather than cure.

That is one reason so many of them are disinterested in such matters as euthanasia. Why put a lot of effort into making killing more humane when the "real" problem is preventing the need for killing?

These people will not accept the fact, brought out so clearly in our *Report to Humanitarians No. 29* (September, 1974), that due to population shifts and other conditions there will always be a pet animal "float," amounting to hundreds of thousands or millions yearly, that will require sheltering and euthanasia no matter how successful the prevention campaign may be.

But it is in connection with the effort to prevent the birth of surplus puppies and kittens that the influence of the "save-a-lifers" is seen to be still the great obstacle to achievement of a balanced pet population.

It is the "save-a-lifers" who are the most vociferous proponents of prevention, yet remain the chief although unknowing opponents of the essential steps required to achieve it.

### MAKE PET OWNERSHIP CHEAP OR EXPENSIVE?

Fred Myers was practical enough to know that he could go only so far in leading his members to accept unpopular but effective remedies for inhumane conditions. So he did not openly denounce the "save-a-lifers" as a great hindrance to humane accomplishment, although privately, to me, he expressed that view.

In fact, he then looked upon me as more or less a "save-a-lifer"!

The intent of practically all humanitarians and humane societies at that time was to make pet ownership as cheap as pos-

sible of more homes for pets and thus remove at least a part of the need for destroying the animals in shelters and pounds.

Thus, they favored dog license fees as low as possible, and opposed cat licensing, as many do now for the same reasons. They wanted to keep the adoption fees or required donations as low as possible, so more animals could be saved from the euthanasia chambers.

Ownership of dogs and cats by people, regardless of their financial ability to provide proper care for the animals, was (and still is, in many places) encouraged. They advocated setting up funds, often collected at great effort, for the purpose of subsidizing the spaying of female animals, so that more animals would be taken by people who were financially unable or unwilling to pay commercial spay charges.

Fred had a different idea altogether. The way to reduce the production of surplus pet animals, he thought, was to make ownership of pets more expensive. Only people who thought enough of their pets, and who were financially able, to provide for all of the needs of their animals should own them.

This would reduce the number of homes able and willing to own pet animals, he acknowledged, and hence would temporarily reduce adoptions and increase the numbers destroyed in shelters and pounds. But the intermediate and longer-run effects would be to greatly reduce the number of surplus animals to be destroyed, and to increase the number of really good homes available.

People, he said, who cannot, or think they cannot, afford to provide proper care for pets will not provide it. If you buy cheap toys, clothing or household articles, you will not give them the same care as you would expensive items, and they will be discarded sooner. If people pay nothing, or only a small amount, for a dog or cat, it would seem foolish to pay fifty dollars a year for veterinary care. Much easier and cheaper, if the animal gets sick or injured, to discard it and get another for nothing or a negligible cost.

Cheap animals, Fred believed, made for cheap care, and cheap regard for the animal's welfare.

As I look back on our conversations, I doubt that Fred had developed this idea to the point of it being a major element in his concept of a pet animal control program. But it was enough to change my attitude toward many things 180 degrees. Things like cat licensing. The "save-a-lifers" oppose this with great fervor, not merely because of what they consider to be difficulties of enforcement. They think it would greatly reduce cat ownership, and they are right. The question is, Do we want the maximum possible number of "owned" cats, or the maximum number of quality homes for cats? Do we want to save the life of a particular cat now, or of many cats that might be born later?

### CHEAP OWNERSHIP IDEAS OF THE SAVE-A-LIFERS STILL PREVAIL

Although many more humanitarians have come around, at least partially, to Fred's viewpoint, the pervasive influence of the "save-a-lifers" and the cheap ownership advocates still prevails in most humane circles.

It is found in the opposition to the proposed requirement that all animals adopted out by shelters and pounds must be spayed or neutered. A proposed bill providing for this under State law went down to defeat in the 1977 Florida legislature, opposed by practically all humane organizations in the State. The same result has been experienced elsewhere. The shelters are afraid that such a requirement would reduce their adoption fees and also the number of animals brought to the shelters because people would get the idea their unwanted pets would have to be destroyed instead of adopted out. (They do not realize what a large proportion is destroyed under the present loose adoption practices. If there were fewer unspayed females adopted, there would be fewer progeny brought to the shelters, and hence a larger proportion then would be adopted out.)

These influences are found also in the opposition to raising adoption fees. With

inflated operating costs, the shelters need more money in order to continue providing the same services. One way to obtain this needed revenue is to raise adoption fees. The latter still would be substantially lower than those prices charged by pet shops and breeders, and the average quality of the animals could be higher. But the "save-a-lifers" wouldn't like it. "You're getting to be as bad as those greedy vets," they would complain. And the would-be "cheapie" pet owners, looking for a low-cost pet on which they would have to spend any money, would be disappointed.

Even the advocates of low-cost, subsidized spay and neuter clinics are part of this "cheapie" policy. As we pointed out in our article on these clinics in *Report to Humanitarians No. 38* (December, 1976), spay and neuter clinics are needed as an offset to those who resist making sterilization a requirement for purchase or adoption of a pet animal, unless the cost can be kept to a figure which the prospective owner "can afford." They insist that the cost of pet ownership must be kept low in order to save lives by extending ownership to people who really cannot afford it.

The influence of the "cheapie" and "save-a-life" crowd also is evident in opposition by humanitarians to substantially increased license fees, a much larger fee differential for sterilized unsterilized animals, and extension of licensing concept to pet animals other than dogs. The costs of pet animal control have mounted to a point where effective and humane control facilities and methods cannot be supported without increased funds from somewhere. The general taxpayer rightfully objects to being saddled with the costs of caring for a problem generated only by pet owners. So the additional money can come only from pet owners. The "cheapiers" and "save-a-lifers" will fight this to the bitter end, not realizing that by doing so they are adding to or continuing the surplus problem.

Please, dear friends, remember that I, too, was of the same mind until I ran up against the inexorable logic of Fred Myers, which has been bolstered by the experiences of many years since.

If we are to do more than keep fulfilling against "irresponsible pet ownership" and actually do something to make them responsible, we will have to abandon these twin policies of "save-a-life" and "make pet ownership cheap." All we have to do is to eliminate or greatly reduce the production and destruction of millions of surplus pet animals yearly is make it as expensive as possible for people to own pets which they are unwilling to care for properly, with needed veterinary care including sterilization.

The real "surplus problem" cannot be laid at the doorstep of "irresponsible owners." They are irresponsible because we permit them to be that way. The ones to blame are the humanitarians who continue to follow misguided, outmoded policies. I reformed. Now it's your turn!

### HUMANE SLAUGHTER BILL

Hearings by the Subcommittee on Livestock and Grains of the Committee on Agriculture of the US House of Representatives were held in Washington, DC, on April 1, 1978, on H.R. 1464, the Brown humane slaughter bill. Humane Information Services and its sister society, the National Association for Humane Legislation, as well as other humane organizations, the US Department of Agriculture and the American Meat Institute were represented and testified in favor of the bill. The Subcommittee has since approved H.R. 1464 with several minor amendments. Later the full Committee on Agriculture voted to approve the bill with amendments. It is expected that the bill will soon go to the full House for a vote.

In the meantime, Senator Bob Dole, of Kansas, has introduced a companion bill in the Senate, S. 3092, which has already passed the Subcommittee on Agriculture, Search and General Legislation and will shortly be considered by the entire Senate.